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Wild tales from Fenwick explorer



CLOCKWISE/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Adam Shoalts, 29, from Fenwick has written a book, *Alone Against the North*, about his adventures exploring remote parts of northern Ontario. He is pictured in one of his favourite, local hiking spots, Short Hills Provincial Park. See story on page 5.



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COMMUNITY

Pelham's 'Thursday Night Experience' will return

WAYNE CAMPBELL
For Postmedia Network

Pelham residents and visitors can expect more of the Thursday night fare when warmer weather returns.

A report on the "Thursday Night Experience" to town council last week recommended continuing co-operation among the Fonthill Bandshell concerts, Pelham Farmers' Market and Pelham Supermarket organizers in Fonthill's Peace Park.

Yet to be determined, however, is whether to expand a liquor-licensed area beyond an enclosed supermarket section to include the whole park.

In answer to a question from Ward 1 Coun. Richard Rybiak, recreation director Vickie van Ravenswaay said a report to a later council meeting will outline the supper market committee's suggestion and licensing officials' reaction.

Members of the concert committee at last Monday night's town council meeting said

they were concerned about the licensed area, possible security requirements and shuttle bus costs.

Independent committees run and finance the concerts, farmers' market and supermarket. Town staff co-ordinate and publicize the evening under a Thursday Night Experience logo.

In the report, the three committees agreed to continue joint promotion and marketing. Similarly, they will stick with a two-year-old parking plan.

IN BRIEF

Augustyn's vote moves gas station forward

Mayor Dave Augustyn cast the deciding vote to permit rezoning of a property for a gas bar and commercial development at Pelham Street and Welland Road.

Ward 3 Coun. John Durley asked for the recorded vote when the rezoning bylaw for 1022 Pelham St. came to council last Monday. It changes the property from agricultural to neighbourhood commercial.

Voting for the bylaw were Augustyn, and Couns. Gary Accursi (Ward 2), Catherine King (Ward 2) and Richard Rybiak (Ward 1). Opposing it were Couns. Durley, Peter Papp (Ward 3) and Marvin Junkin (Ward 1).

The controversial proposal for land at the south entrance to Fonthill has been debated for more than a year and was an issue in the 2014 civic election.

The developer, 4 High Street Inc., has made numerous changes in design and landscaping as well as sectioning off a residential zone as a buffer.

Neighbours oppose it as an unnecessary, noisy development that will disturb their privacy, endanger a watershed area and affect property values.

Female change room coming to Pelham arena

Female hockey players and skaters will finally have a room of their own at the Pelham Arena.

The town will spend \$23,800 to convert a Pelham Minor Hockey Association office into a female dressing room. It will also change a custodial closet into a single-use washroom.

More than a year ago, the hockey association and female players complained about the lack

of dressing facilities for players, especially those on mixed teams. They resorted to hallways and public washrooms.

The renovation will take six weeks after start of construction. The minor hockey association will retain part of its office.

The town will pay for the work from a facilities reserve fund.

Moment of silence for former mayor and Paris victims

Former Pelham mayor Mard Collins was remembered by a moment of silence at last Monday's town council meeting.

Collins served as mayor for six years (1988-1994) following 16 years as a Pelham school trustee on the then Niagara South Board of Education.

As mayor she was also the town's only regional councillor.

Collins died Nov. 4.

Town council also took time to pause for those people killed in the Paris shootings.

The Fonthill arches in front of town hall were lit with blue, white and red lights, the colour of the French flag.

Sound panels for seniors' room

Seniors using a room in the Old Pelham Town Hall will enjoy the sounds of silence.

Town council last Monday approved spending \$3,100 to paint-matched sound panels in the hall's seniors' room.

At its last meeting, \$31,600 was set aside for similar panels in the main hall of the building.

Following a major renovation last year, hall users have complained about poor acoustics disrupting their use of the hall. Noise echoes off the high walls and ceiling.

Pelham OK with Internet tower to west

A 35-metre communications tower sits well with Pelham town council. Council last Monday night.

"Indicated concurrence" of the proposed tower at 1261 Victoria Ave.

It will go on private property north of Canboro Road and a railway line in Fenwick.

Xelomnet Communications of Markham will build the self-support lattice tower to supply internet services on a property used as an auto parts and wrecking yard.

Skills Clinic 2016

Skills and Drills - Age 8 to 14 - Field A
QB's & Receivers - Age 13 to 19 - Field B

Dates: January 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th
February 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th
March 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th

Times: All sessions

7:30pm to 9:00pm

Location: Sportsplex, 3710

Sinnicks Ave., Niagara Falls

Included - Special Meeting Room Seminars For Adults
(Participate in any or all)

- 1 • Offensive Coordinator • Jan 21st
Facilitator: Dave Sauer Offensive Roll & Function
- 2 • Defensive Coordinator • Feb 4th
Facilitator: Mike Solanki defensive Coordinator Roll & Function
Former High School Coach & current scout for McMaster University
- 3 • Referee Seminar • Feb. 18th
Facilitators: Referees From the Lakeshore Referee Association
- 4 • Parent Participation Night (Gym attire required) March 24th
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■ **BIZ BUZZ:** New antique shop in Ridgville

One man's trash ...

FRANKI IKEMAN
Postmedia Network

It's this man's gold.

"I don't know, it's in your blood. I'm a junker, that's all I can tell you. You can't explain that, you know, it's an addiction," says Bob O'Hara.

The Welland resident has opened an antique store in Ridgville at the corner of Canboro Road and Effingham Street. His collection of items ranging from clothing to furniture to nick-nacs and everything in between spills out of the building seven days a week.

O'Hara has been in the business for about 40 years, he says, and when the location became available he decided to go for it.

"The whole idea was — I clean out estates for a living; buy, sell, warehouses, like you see on TV — and I needed an outlet," he says. "I sell a little bit of everything, but I love antiques. That's my favourite thing."

But the quiet Pelham village isn't O'Hara's first market.

"I've done it everywhere. Florida, Chile ... I moved down there to do it — didn't make any money, but I had a lot

of fun," O'Hara says.

He says landing in Ridgville was an accident. He says the right building became available ahead of the first winter that he won't be going away and it gives him something to do through the colder months.

The location has turned out to be better than expected.

"It's a good location, look at the traffic, the audience — it's unreal."

O'Hara says the first two and a half months of business have been decent.

"It's OK, I'm not getting rich or anything. Pays the bills and that's important, and it gives me an outlet to play and clean my stuff and work on it and do stuff on that," he says.

And when he has a particularly good day he calls that a home run.

The antique store isn't O'Hara's only business. The 71-year-old keeps himself busy running a trucking company as well as a flea market in Jordan. His age isn't slowing him down anytime soon.

"I'm very active ... you've got to be, you can't just lay around," he says.

O'Hara can be reached at Bob's Boys Antiques and Collectables at 905-736-0051.



Bob O'Hara is pictured in his Ridgville antique store.

FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK



FRANKI IKEMAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Bob O'Hara is pictured in his Ridgville antique store.

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Water budget presentation all wet

DAVE AUGUSTYN
 For Postmedia Network

Some regional councillors congratulated themselves for approving a "combined 0.03 per cent reduction in the Region's water and wastewater budget, resulting in a net operating budget of \$1.08 million."

A recent news release quoted Regional Chair Alan Casslin: "These reduced budgets show that our Council is focused on affordability for Niagara residents."

First, this misleads by telling only part of the story. Second, the facts show that the Region's "zero budget guidance" did not focus water and wastewater affordability.

As you may recall, the regional portion of your water and sewer rates pays for both the water and sewer treatment costs and delivery costs to 11 of Niagara's towns and cities. The Region works with local staff to estimate the amount of water each municipality will sell to its residents and businesses and the amount of waste water it will send to the Region to treat.

Essentially, the Region wholesales water production and waste water treatment to the local municipalities. The local municipalities then add local distribution (water) and collection (sewer) costs to retail service to residents and businesses.

So, while a near zero budget change sounds good, it's the impact on the customers — the 11 cities and towns — and, ultimately,

residents and businesses, that really matters.

The Region charges 25 per cent of its water budget to the local municipalities as a fixed cost; that portion of the bill is increasing by 0.3 per cent. But, what about the other portion? The Region will recover the remaining 75 per cent at a set rate. Council increased that rate from \$0.537 per cubic meter to \$0.554; that's a whopping 3.2 per cent increase.

What does that mean for local cities? First, cities will have to mitigate the Region's 0.3 per cent fixed-cost increase on the fixed-cost portion of our water bills. Second, the 3.2 per cent increase on the consumption portion of our bill means a huge uphill battle — we will need to recover nearly \$970,000 of distribution savings and innovations or pass along

the costs to consumers.

What about wastewater? It's a similar scenario. While the overall regional sewer budget will decrease slightly (by 0.2 per cent), the Region expects to treat two per cent less wastewater. This forces Niagara cities to contend with 1.8 per cent increases in the costs per unit treated. That will force towns to pass along another \$853,800.

Unfortunately, despite the rhetoric, these significant rate increases show that regional council failed to focus on water and wastewater affordability for Niagara's cities and towns and ultimately failed Niagara's residents and businesses.

You may contact Mayor Dave at mayordave@pelham.ca or read past columns at www.pelhammayordave.blogspot.com.



Rochambeau is shown in Montreal in April 1970 in this Harry Stott photo courtesy of Rene Beauchamp.

Shipwrecks — Rochambeau

SKIP GILLHAM
 For Postmedia Network

Rochambeau was a French-built and French-owned freighter that dated from 1967. It was completed at Le Trait, France, in August 1967 and equipped to handle refrigerated as well general cargo.

The 152.81-metre-long *Rochambeau* came to the Great Lakes for the first time in 1970 but usually operated on saltwater routes. It was sold and rebuilt as a livestock carrier in 1970-73 and resumed trading under the flag of Italy as *Siba Queen*.

It moved under Panamanian registry as *El Borrego* in 1988 and retained that flag on becoming *Al Rayyan I* in 1989.

Trouble developed on the Arabian Sea during a voyage from Fujairah, Trucial States to Colombo, Sri Lanka, and the ship had to be abandoned by the crew on June 9, 1994. They got off safely but their vessel sank to the bottom of the sea.

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■ ADAM SHOALTS: Fenwick 29-year-old is still exploring the world's faraway places

The man against the wild

CHERYL CLOCK
Pelham News Network

The sky was darkened with thick clouds of bloodthirsty bugs, their high-pitched whine unrelenting to the point of madness. The mesh net he wore over his head offered as much protection as an umbrella in a torrential downpour.

He was cold to the bone, soaking wet and exhausted from pulling his canoe over endless expanses of bog-like terrain in remote parts of northern Canada or through frigid waters when a stream was too shallow or rocky to paddle.

He had just two sets of clothes. A dry set to wear around camp at night and a wet set to be worn all the other times. Each morning before he set off on the next leg of his wilderness journey, he pulled on his still-wet clothing from the day before.

At the start of his trip, he sliced his thumb launching his canoe. The ensuing infection that was causing it to throb had progressed to the colour green.

And he was alone. Alone in polar bear territory, somewhere in the lowlands of Hudson Bay.

Indeed, the place Adam Shoalts had always dreamed of exploring.

The 29-year-old from Fenwick was on an expedition to find and explore a river that hadn't yet been named or

otherwise chronicled, in the depths of northern Canadian wilderness.

He originally set out with a friend because the risk of going it alone was too great. But partway through the trip, his friend bailed. Shoalts offers an interpretation: "He thought exploring was more glamorous to read about than actually do."

They used a satellite phone to summon a float plane. And on Day 11 of the 23-day expedition, Shoalts stood alone on a riverbank surrounded by miles of treeless tundra, and watched the plane disappear into the overcast sky.

"I was pretty nervous and a little alarmed," he says.

Sure, he had done other expeditions and been on his share of solo canoe trips into places like Algonquin Park. But this was different. Even the local guides warned about the dangers of travelling alone through polar bear territory.

But Shoalts had a lot riding on this trip.

It was the first time one of his expeditions was being funded by the Royal Canadian Geographical Society. And he couldn't quit.

"I really had no choice but to stay behind," he says. "Failure wasn't an option. I'd put so much on the line just to get there in the first place."

And so began his first solo expedition that would become

the catalyst for future, solitary trips.

Shoalts tells the stories of this and other wilderness adventures in his most recent book, *Alone Against the North: An Expedition into the Unknown* (Penguin Random House).

His narrative is both humorous and honest, and at times intensely gripping, as he tells his obsession with exploring the river he would later name Little Owl, and another called the Again, in the Hudson Bay Lowlands. No person had ever documented either waterway.

During the expeditions, he endures the physical hardship of hauling both canoe and gear across rugged landscapes and the mental burden of doing it alone.

And yet, always the consummate frontiersman, he always seems to maintain perspective on adversity and danger.

Indeed, ever since he was a boy growing up in Fenwick, he's felt he belonged in the woods. His playground was the 200-plus acres of deciduous woodland next to his house.

And he would look at maps on the backs of cereal boxes, and imagine the adventures he would find in distant places.

"There's just something so mysterious about a place on a

map that you don't know," he says.

He devoured books on wilderness survival, folklore and outdoor skills. His heroes are early explorers, and he felt a personal connection to the hardships they endured in their quest to explore faraway corners of the world.

"Historical analogy helps to make sense of this perspective," he says. "I should tell myself, in comparison to Hugh Glass, the mountain man who got mauled by a grizzly and left for dead, this is not that bad at all."

In 2012, Shoalts set out for his third attempt at finding, then exploring, the Again River, a watercourse that crisscrosses the northern boundary of Ontario and Quebec.

The river itself spans about 107 kilometres, but the journey to actually find it covered several hundred, and was the most difficult part of the trip. For Shoalts trampled through seemingly impenetrable woods, then doubled back to haul his canoe and gear over the primitive route.

Yet perhaps one of the most harrowing moments happened on the Again River, following a sleepless night in a tent on a slab of granite in the middle of a lightning storm.

He was enjoying a relatively

easy paddle when he noticed ahead a sharp bend in the river, and a drop — read possible waterfall.

"Even when I first see the drop, I'm not that alarmed because it doesn't look that big," he says.

So he canoed over it. He dropped 1.5 metres, unexpected but certainly not extreme for a seasoned canoeist. And although the canoe flooded, it was still buoyant and he kept paddling.

Then came the second drop — 4.5 metres.

He was flung out of the canoe.

"The next thing I know, I'm underwater," he says.

Caught in a deep pool of water just below where the waterfall is pouring down, he remains submerged, even with a life-jacket.

Eventually, his head popped above the surface of the water,

THE ADVENTURES OF ADAM SHOALTS

What: Author and adventurer Adam Shoalts will talk about his new book, *Alone Against the North*. He'll share some pictures from his adventures and have copies of his books available for sale.

When: Tuesday, Jan. 12, 7 p.m.

Where: St. Catharines library.

To learn more about Adam Shoalts, visit his website at adams Shoalts.com

only to catch a glimpse of his gear floating down the river.

He swam to shore, then jumped from boulder to boulder downstream to rescue his waterlogged barrel, backpack and both his paddles. The canoe had come to rest in a calm eddy, with a cave-in hull and split gunwales. Yet, with some in-the-field repairs, it was still functional.



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■ GOVERNMENT

Region looks ahead 25 years to predict Niagara's growth

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

Niagara Region is looking ahead to 2041.

Regional council has endorsed a report that, if approved by the province, will see updated Ontario population and employment forecasts used to plan for the future.

The new forecast includes an additional 168,000 people not included in Niagara's most recent 2031 growth plan.

Niagara is required to update its growth forecasts following changes to Ontario's growth plan.

As a result, the Region is undertaking a municipal comprehensive review, transportation master servicing plan, and water and wastewater master servicing plan as part of the Niagara 2041 Growth Strategy.

That projected population increase means the Region, through the comprehensive review, can "now allocate to the areas and communities that are looking to grow beyond the current boundary limits," said planning and development services commissioner Rino Mostacci. The Town of Grimsby, for instance,

has made a submission to expand its urban area and Niagara-on-the-Lake is looking at potential growth along Stone Road and in the Niagara on the Green area.

"There are others across the region that we're aware of," he said.

"This additional quantum allows us to address that without undermining or taking away from any of the developable urban designated land in the other communities."

The review will include public consultation and municipal engagement.

When regional staff meet with

local municipalities, clarity is key, Port Colborne regional councillor David Barick said.

"There's a sense that some local communities will be missing out or losing out on something and that just isn't the case," he said. "Enhancing the level of available properties for development across the entire region is good for the entire region."

"We will be crystal clear," Mostacci said.

"We want to see every corner of the region grow," he said, adding each community deserves the "opportunity to grow and prosper."

Mostacci feels there is a "sense of anx-

ity" at the municipal level, due in part to when a municipal comprehensive review was last conducted as part of the process for the 2031 strategy.

At that time, some communities were looking for additional urban land.

"We were unable to accommodate that because we didn't have the quantum of growth allocated by the province," Mostacci said.

"What's happening with 2041 is we're unlocking that. It's unlocking that gridlock and we now have a quantum we can distribute accordingly."

maryanne.firth@postmedia.ca
Twitter: @firthStandard

■ GOVERNMENT

Online program tracks Niagara's progress

MARYANNE FIRTH
Postmedia Network

The public can now keep a watchful eye on Niagara Region's progress from the comfort of home.

An online economic prosperity dashboard was launched that tracks Niagara's status, as well as its targets, in a number of sectors including community well-being, employment growth, infrastructure, investment and taxation.

"We wanted to convey to the public exactly what we're doing and how we're doing on six significant measures we feel are important to our community," Regional Chairman Alan Caslin said recently.

The innovative project was introduced to councillors last month.

Each of the six categories is broken down further into a number of factors that indicate whether Niagara is improving, remaining static or worsening.

Under community, for instance, factors include the area's Ontario Works caseload, median household income and affordable housing waiting list, among others.

Each includes current Niagara data, as well as a target council is striving to reach by a set date.

Also listed are regional, provincial and federal projects that impact those various components.

"We've been working on factors that influence the dials we have in front of us

LOOK IT UP

The dashboard is available online at www.niagararegion.ca/priorities/dashboard

to try to improve those," Caslin said.

"The only way we can really gain some focus is if we have those measures in front of us and can use them to guide what we do."

Much of the data available on the dashboard is provided from regularly updated provincial statistics and external sources, though some comes directly from regional departments.

It's updated as it becomes available to regional staff, to give users a real-time view of where Niagara stands at any given time, Caslin said.

"This is not something that's static. It's very dynamic," he said.

In addition to continuously changing data, the categories being monitored might also be modified as time goes on.

"If we find we've achieved a goal and it's time to adopt another, we'll change that as necessary to make sure we're focused on the right things."

Council wanted to ensure the project was "totally transparent," said Caslin, who encouraged people to "dig into the data" of the information-rich dashboard.

EDGE OF THE WOODS THEATRE

DEC 2 - 3

Ralph + Lina

An acrobatic comedy following the struggle of two Italian lovers in the face of war, immigration and old age.



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RECREATION PROGRAMS & CLASS

Drop-In Zumba Classes @ Pelham Arena

Tuesday, December 1 9:30 – 10:30 am
No Classes
 Wednesday, December 2 7:30 – 8:30 pm
 Thursday, December 3 10:00-11:00 am

Arena Programs

Walking Club - Everyone Welcome!

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Community Workshop: Ontario Culture Strategy

Thursday, December 3, 2015
6:30pm

Old Pelham Town Hall
491 Canboro Road, Ridgeville

Help Shape Ontario's First Culture Strategy
The more information, contact Jennifer Cameron at 905-892-5055 ext. 349

Public Skating	Adult Public Skating	Adult/Preschool	Men's Shiny Hockey	Women's Shiny Hockey	Women's Learn to Play Hockey	Pelham Panthers-Home Games
Sunday, Nov 29 1:00-2:20 pm Tuesday, Dec 1 4:00-5:00 pm Friday, Dec 4 3:30-4:30 pm	Thursday, Dec 3 1:00-2:00 pm	Tuesday, Dec 1 1:00-2:00 pm Friday, Dec 4 10:00-11:00 am	Tuesday, Dec 1 8:00-9:00 am Friday, Dec 4 9:00-10:00 am	Monday, Nov 30 9:30-10:45 am Thursday, Dec 3 10:30-11:45 am	Thursday, Dec 3 9:30-10:30 am Hockey Skills Hour Monday, Nov 30 11:00-12:00 pm Thursday, Dec 3 2:00-3:00 pm	Tuesday, Dec 1 7:00 pm vs. Niagara Falls Friday, Dec 4 7:30 pm vs. Thorold

Pelham NIAGARA
CALL FOR MEMBERS – TOWN COMMITTEES
 The Town of Pelham is seeking interested individuals to join the:

- Summerfest Committee
- Pelham Library Board
- Community Beautification Committee (formerly the Communities in Bloom Committee)

Visit pelham.ca for application details and to apply by Monday, November 30, 2015.
 For more information, please contact the Town Clerk at: NJBozzola@pelham.ca or (905) 892-2607 ext. 315.

CHRISTMAS IN PELHAM (November 4, 2015 – January 3, 2016)

Get ready for the holidays. Check out these great upcoming events around Town and watch for more next week!

December 1 - January 1: Temperanceville Historic Display (Peace Park, Fonthill)
December 1 - January 1: Christmas Light Displays & Competition (Throughout Town)
December 2 (2pm to 3pm): Seniors Holiday Social – Pelham Public Library (Fonthill)
December 2 (2pm to 4pm): Lessons, Carols & Cookies (Fonthill United Church)

Outdoor Christmas Market Friday, December 4, 2015 | 4pm to 10pm

Under the Fonthill Arches, 20 Pelham Town Square – Fonthill

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Visit pelham.ca for details!

Visit pelham.ca/christmas-in-pelham for details.

Pelham NIAGARA
 Residents are invited to participate in our upcoming open house to provide input for the 2016 Town of Pelham capital and operating budgets.

Monday, November 30, 2015 @ 6:30 pm
 Pelham Council Chambers at Town Hall (20 Pelham Town Square in Fonthill)

Can't make it to the open house?
 Send us your suggestions to ourbudget@pelham.ca
 for more information, visit pelham.ca

Santa Claus Parade

Pelham's 18th Annual Santa Claus Parade
Saturday, December 12, 2015

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS!

Visit pelham.ca for details!

CALL FOR VENDORS: Pelham Outdoor Christmas Market - Applications available at pelham.ca & Town Hall.

Call for Nominations
 Pelham Christmas Lights Tour
 Deadline: Saturday, December 5, 2015
 Nomination forms are available at pelham.ca and at Pelham Town Hall.

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HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Weak dollar brightens Canadian Black Friday

DON FRASER

Postmedia Network

A devoted loonie may help buck a cross-border shopping habit this holiday season.

And that's good news for Canadian border retailers who were readying for another Black Friday kickoff to the annual spending blitz.

"It's going to be significant," said Joanne Ross, general manager of the Outlet Collection at Niagara, which is heading into its second Black Friday since opening last year.

As the value of the Canadian dollar continues its plunge, more Canucks are expected to spend their dollars domestically.

And the Outlet Collection in Niagara-on-the-Lake is gearing up for beaded up consumer-punking excitement and doubling up on security.

"With the Canadian dollar the way it is now, we're anticipating to see our traffic and sales increase even more," Ross said. "So our retailers are stocking up, gearing up and staffing appropriately."

"We think it's going to be an

excellent day."

Black Friday — tomorrow — is traditionally the first Friday that follows the American Thanksgiving.

But in recent years, Canadian retailers adopted it, with sales held at the same time to counter cross-border shopping deals in the U.S.

It leads into Cyber Monday, when online retailers mark down popular items such as electronics, clothes and books.

A trend has also been to extend the sales blitz over several days or even a week.

At The Pen Centre, a Black Friday event again takes place from today to Sunday.

"It's certainly an established sale Pen Centre shoppers have come to expect," said mall marketing director Rick Woodward.

The centre started the event four years ago with a Thursday launch "for a specific reason."

"And that was to try and capture some of those Canadian dollars before they decided to head across the river," Woodward said.

Meanwhile, "the pendulum has swung a little bit, now the

dollar is worth about 75 cents (on the American dollar)," he said.

"We've seen steady increases in our sales at the shopping centre over the last six months, with sales up on average about 14 to 16 per cent each month."

"It's very significant," Woodward said, adding a year ago, a new Outlet Collection mall drew in curious "tre-kickers interested in visiting, checking out and shopping there."

"But we've seen those shoppers return," he said. "And there's been a strong increase in sales, which can be attributed to the lower Canadian dollar."

As for overall shopping trends in Canada, marketers aren't quite sure how it will play out this year.

SAS, an analytics research company, said its polling research shows Canadians shopping plan to buy less this holiday season than last year.

In a release, the company said Canadians are also planning to shop "around the holiday discount cycle" buying gifts when the best deals are at hand.

It said while Black Friday and Cyber Monday rule the roost in American holiday shopping pat-

terns, Canadians are still not far behind, with nearly a quarter surveyed saying they're likely to shop on Black Friday and 17 per cent on Cyber Monday.

Accenture, a global services company paints a slightly different picture in its report.

It says 34 per cent of Canadian consumers plan to spend more on holiday shopping than last year, a rise of 13 per cent from Accenture's last survey.

That also indicates a drop in cross-border shopping with only 27 per cent saying they'd travel south of the border to shop, compared to 24 per cent per cent last year. Almost a third of shoppers polled cited the weak dollar as their reason for staying put.

Michael LeBlanc, senior vice-president of the Retail Council of Canada, said the Canadian dollar is having a definite impact on setting cross-border traffic, and notes online sales are an impor-



JULIE JOSSAN/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Operations manager Travis Jeffray, tourism manager Carly Ruppel-Hulley, centre, and Joanne Ross, general manager of the Outlet Collection at Niagara are photographed in a store window with a sign advertising a Black Friday sale. More Americans are expected to cross the border to take advantage of the low Canadian dollar.

tant part of the sales mix now. LeBlanc said Canadians have traditionally shopped across the border for reasons of better assortment and price.

"It's fair to say that over time, both of those are being addressed," he said, pointing to a robust mega-mall presence in Niagara as one example.

He said while there isn't Statistics Canada cross-border shopping data available, they do monitor same-day Canadian vis-

its to the U.S.

"It's not a bad proxy for Canadian cross-border shopping," LeBlanc said. "And those visits are down around 18 per cent, year over year."

"The value of the dollar, and better assortment on-line and (in Canadian stores) plays a role as well. As a shopper, I can now get it here."

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Twitter: @don_standard

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COMMUNITY FUNDRAISING

United Way campaign breaks \$100,000 mark

GREG FURMINGER
Postmedia Network

Two months in to United Way of South Niagara's \$650,000 fundraising campaign, total donations are breaking into the six-figure mark.

"We are at just about \$100,000 right now," Tamara Coleman-Lawrie, the organization's executive director, says.

"We're in line with some of our projections."

Numbers typically escalate toward the end of the fundraising period when workplace campaigns start reporting their sums. Some campaigns, Coleman-

Lawrie says, have started a little later than normal this year.

A recent United Way Auction for Action at Seaway Mall raised just more than \$10,000, she says.

Donors can expect other fundraisers to come, but not the once-popular Jail and Bail event which was dropped a number of years ago. Coleman-Lawrie suggests people mark Friday, Feb. 26, on their calendars as day of a big United Way dogeball tournament, for which details will be announced later.

It's about the time that the campaign, which years ago used to conclude much earlier, will be wrapping up.

Non-profit agencies in Welland, Port Colborne, Pelham and Wainfleet, and surrounding areas, that have come to rely on the generosity of United Way donors have been recently notified that it is time for them to start making submissions for 2016 funding.

Coleman-Lawrie says she's anticipating requests totalling about \$900,000 to \$1 million — far more than the United Way campaign goal that matches last year's \$650,000 figure.

"Unfortunately, (the goal) has been set by the predicted resources we can get," she says while remarking about the mil-

lion-dollar-plus targets reached recently or so ago, when Welland and area industry was thriving and workplace campaigns at plants that hadn't shut down provided a huge chunk of change to the United Way.

"It's a shame," Coleman-Lawrie says, "because we know the need for funding hasn't been cut in half."

Among beneficiaries of funds last raised through the local United Way are Big Brothers Big Sisters of South Niagara, Autism Ontario's Niagara chapter, Niagara Regional Sexual Assault Centre, Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet, Epilepsy Niagara, Port Cares, Family Counselling Centre Niagara, Strive Niagara, Hope Centre and Women's Place of South Niagara.

At United Way's Welland office a staff complement of just two and a half people are working hard on behalf of the agencies that need help, she says, adding there's some misconception that the local United Way is "a huge conglomerate" that can breeze through fundraising efforts.

Donors are the people who make a difference, she says.

John and Rebecca Clark, owners of M.T. Bellies and Riverstone Event Centre, for their third year will match donations by new donors up to a total \$20,000.

Tuesday was the Clark family's eighth annual It's a Wonderful Life event in support of the campaign. All of the \$150 tickets for the fundraiser at Riverstone that includes a seven-course meal prepared by chef Roland Gaspar plus entertainment were sold.

Milan Pental, senior investment adviser at Pental-Lewis Wealth Management Group, a branch of National Bank, is matching up to a total \$20,000 worth of new business leaders who contribute \$1,000 or more, or past leaders who up their ante by at least 10 per cent, Coleman-Lawrie says.

People who want to donate are encouraged to stop by the United Way's Seaway Mall office.

"We're here on the second floor," Coleman-Lawrie says. "People can slide their envelope under the door if they don't want to leave it in the mailbox."

People can also donate by going to www.unitedwaysouthniagara.ca or calling 905-735-0490.



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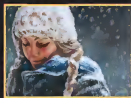
SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS
Saturday, Dec 5, 12 & 19
1 pm • SIMCOE PARK



Come out and celebrate the holidays! The town Niagara-on-the-Lake and TD Niagara Jazz Festival proudly present the *Sounds of Christmas* at Simcoe Park. Saturdays, December 5, 12 and 19 from 1 pm - 3 pm. Admission is free. Bring your own chair and beverages. Limited picnic benches available. Please consider patronizing local food and beverage retailers. For further information, contact Kevin Turcotte at 905-468-3061 x 263 or kturcotte@notl.org.

Merry Christmas

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17th ANNUAL ROTARY Holiday House Tour

Friday, DEC 4 to SATURDAY, DEC 5
10 AM - 4 PM



The 17th annual Rotary Holiday House Tour invites everyone to visit a variety of historic and contemporary properties, all decorated for the holiday season by local businesses and volunteers. Your support benefits countless others in Niagara and throughout the world. Tour operates regardless of the weather. \$25.00 per person. Order online at www.niagaraoonthelake.com. Purchased tickets can be picked up between 10 am and 5 pm, 7 days a week, at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce, on the lower level at 26 Queen St., Niagara-on-the-Lake.

Candlelight Stroll



Friday, December 4

Take a guided stroll through historic old town, accompanied by local choirs and seasonal entertainment. Festivities begin at 6:30 pm on Queen Street in front of the Clock Tower and Courthouse.

Proceeds from this year's candle sale will support a child in need this Christmas season.
\$3 per candle or 2 for \$5.00.

Please bring a non-perishable food item for Newark Neighbours.



26 Queen Street, Niagara-on-the-Lake 905-468-1950 niagaraoonthelake.com

27th ANNUAL CANDLE LIGHT STROLL

Friday, DEC. 4 | QUEEN STREET HERITAGE DISTRICT | STARTING AT 6:30 PM

Niagara-on-the-Lake's Annual Candlelight Stroll takes place on Friday, Dec. 4, with caroling from the Court House steps beginning at 6:30 pm.

A favourite tradition for many families, the Candlelight Stroll begins with the Town Crier gathering everyone together in front of the Court House on Queen Street, with carol singing and the candle lighting ceremony. All participants in the stroll have an opportunity to purchase a candle with cup for \$3, or two for \$5.

As is customary at the Stroll, there will be a special performance by Debbie Whitehouse, singing from the Court House steps, later joined by the Salvation Army Band, as part of the opening ceremonies.

Lord Mayor Patrick Dartie will introduce this year's recipient of the Candlelight Stroll candle sale proceeds.

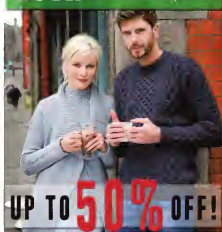
Following the custom established by Arthur Neidorf and his wife, Irene, and the Friends of the Stroll, funds raised from the event will be used to brighten the world of a child in need at Christmas time.



Joe Caruana with Bexfun Foundation Founder Mike Strange and Caruana's two sons Andrew, left, and Brandon. The Bexfun Foundation was named as the 2014 recipient of the Candlelight Stroll proceeds. Brandon is a cancer survivor and he is one of the motivating young individuals as to why Strange established the Bexfun Foundation. The Foundation's focus is to raise awareness for childhood cancers and research. Strange and the Caruana family led last year's Candlelight Stroll.

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The stroll route will be alive with entertainment from various choirs and musical entertainers, including the Salvation Army Band, the Fort George Junior Fife and Drum Corps, Grace United Church, Sing Niagara, Niagara Christian Assembly, A Capella Niagara, German School Choir, Royal Oak School, Bethany Bell Ringers, Images, Brass Quintet, Sir Winston Churchill Choir, The Yellow Door Theatre Company and Resurrection Lutheran Church. Debbie Whitehouse will lead the carol singing from the Court House steps.

A Christmas wagon will be displayed by Sentinella Carriages on Queen Street and we hope to fill it high with donations of non-perishable goods for Newark Neighbours.

Many volunteers make this event a tremendous success—members of the Chamber of Commerce and the Town staff all work together to produce a perfect evening.

The Chamber of Commerce is delighted to be able to continue this well-loved tradition of sharing in the joys of the Holiday Season with neighbours and friends and looks forward to welcoming new visitors this year. For more information, call (905) 468-1950 or visit our website, www.niagaraoonthelake.com.

Traditional Christmas Dinner
Delivered to your door
Dec. 24 from 11-1

Your choice of Seasonal Green salad or Buttercrust Squash and Four Soup
Full Turkey Dinner with herb-marinated potatoes, seasonal vegetables, onion, sweet and apple stuffing, home-made cranberry sauce, velvety smooth gravy

Your choice of Eggnog Cheesecake or Peppercorn Cookies and Squares
\$25 per person

905-262-1668
HOLIDAY MENUS can be viewed at www.kristinasfinefoods.com

SHAW FESTIVAL FILM SERIES

Film: Saturdays from Dec 5 - Feb 20

DOCUMENTARY: Fridays from Jan 1 - Feb 12

Begin Dec. 5 at 3 pm for feature films (runs to Feb. 20) and Jan 1 at 5:30 pm for documentaries (runs to Feb 12). All at the Festival Theatre. Advance and same day tickets available at the Shaw Festival Box Office: 905-468-2172 or 1-800-511-7429. www.shawfest.com/films

Pillitteri Christmas**OPEN HOUSE**

Saturday, December 5 • 1 pm to 4 pm

Stop by Pillitteri for its Christmas Open House. Complimentary Hors d'oeuvres, Christmas cookies and wine will be served. Shop for great gift ideas. Also, decorate your own Christmas-themed wine glasses (\$10 fee includes glass). Sessions will be hosted by our resident Christmas crafters. Times are 1:15, 2:15 and 3:15. Design your own wine gift wrapping and baskets. Also, they will be collecting donations for the local Niagara Food Bank.

TOWN OF NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE**SANTA CLAUS PARADE**

Saturday, Dec. 12 | 11 AM



What better way to infuse Christmas spirit into the upcoming holiday season than by attending the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake's Annual Santa Claus Parade. Noted as one of Ontario's best Santa Claus Parades, come celebrate and catch a glimpse of the big guy himself, Santa. Starts at 11 am along Queen Street. Call 905-468-4261 for more information.

MORE LOCAL EVENTS

Life Under Canvas: NIAGARA CAMP 1915-1919 – Niagara Historical Society & Museum Exhibition from now until to March 31, 2016. An exhibition commemorating 100 Years of the First World War Training Camp in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Niagara Historical Museum, 43 Castlereagh Street, 905-468-3912.

FORT GEORGE GARRISON CHRISTMAS

Saturday, Dec. 12 & Sunday, Dec 13

NOON-4 pm



Experience Christmas past at Fort George Garrison style just like officers, soldiers and their families did. Savour special dishes in the Officers' kitchen and bask in the glow of the fire against the pomp and pageantry of the fife and drums, create period crafts and play games for all ages. Join the costumed staff and volunteers of Fort George for a day of festive merry-making and revelry you will remember for years to come! For information: 905-468-6614, email ont-niagara@pc.gc.ca or www.pc.gc.ca/fortgeorge

NEW YEAR'S DAY LEEVE

JANUARY 1 | 3 pm | Navy Hall



The New Year's Levee is a tradition dating back to the beginning of government, where citizens would renew their allegiance to the Crown. In modern times, we commemorate this tradition and invite all residents and visitors to gather on the first day of the New Year. Official toasts, presented at 4:00 pm by local dignitaries, followed by a ceremonial gun salute by Fort George staff and a music presentation by the Fort George Fife and Drum Corps. Complimentary light refreshments available. Call 905-468-6621 or visit www.friendsoffortgeorge.ca

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Wednesday - Saturday 10-8
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ICEWINE FESTIVAL

JANUARY 1 - 31, 2016



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Icewine Festival will engage all of your senses during this celebration of all things icewine. It doesn't matter if you are a wine enthusiast or a cocktail fan, a foodie or a music lover; there's sure to be an event that speaks to your passion while offering an unforgettable icewine experience. Visit www.niagaraonthelake.com/winter for more event details and tickets.

SPARKLE & ICE
DIAMOND GALA

Friday, JANUARY 15 • 8 pm



In its third year, the Sparkle and Ice Diamond Gala is in celebration of the 21 Annual Icewine Festival. Niagara-on-the-Lake icewine makers and their VQA wines are perfectly paired with icewine-inspired tastings from the Signature Kitchen Chefs. The beautiful setting in the Grand Hall of the Courthouse and live entertainment will make this an evening to remember. \$95.00 per person. Purchase your tickets at www.niagaraonthelake.com

SPARKLE & ICE
CONCERT

Saturday, JANUARY 16 • 8 pm

RARE appearance by Dominic Mancuso



The Niagara-on-the-Lake Chamber of Commerce and Bravo Niagara! Festival of the Arts co-present a rare appearance by the sensational Dominic Mancuso Group in the Grand Hall of the Courthouse. Icewine paired desserts and VQA wines will be served by the Signature Kitchen Chefs and Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Tickets \$75 per person. Purchase your tickets at www.niagaraonthelake.com

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OLiV Tasting Room & Bistro

@ Niagara Outlet Collection | 300 Taylor Rd. | 905.665.6548

OLiV Tasting Room | 122 Queen Street | 289.868.8898

Visit www.olivtastingroom.com for full product listings

NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE ICE WINE VILLAGE

Saturday, Jan. 23 & Sunday, Jan. 24
Saturday, Jan. 30 & Sunday, Jan. 31



Niagara-on-the-Lake's historic Queen Street transforms into a winter wonderland as the town comes together to play their part in wine country's annual icewine celebration with culinary creations, music, shopping and sparkling ice sculptures. www.niagaraonthelake.com/winter

Flash and Panache: Icewine Cocktail Competition

Saturday, Jan. 23



The Icewine Village in the Heritage District takes on a whole new energy once the lights are dimmed from 9 to 11 p.m. Get out and experience the amazing icewine cocktails created by the Signature Kitchen Chefs of Niagara-on-the-Lake. And it's a Niagara-on-the-Lake competition, so you know the bar will be high -- and it's a bar made of ice! An event not to be missed, music, interesting cocktails and culinary accompaniments from the Signature Kitchen Chefs. www.niagaraonthelake.com/winter

WHITE ON ICE DINNER

Thursday, January 28 • 7 pm
Queen Street Icewine Village



Celebrate 21 years of the Icewine Festival at an amazing outdoor dinner in the Icewine Village. Enjoy the comfort of a heated tent, delicious VQA wines and mouthwatering cuisine from the Signature Kitchen Chefs. This will be a night to remember with live musical entertainment and dancing under the Winter sky! \$100 per person (+HST). Phone 905-468-1950 for more details. For tickets, visit www.niagaraonthelake.com.

ICEBREAKERS' Comedy Festival

Thursday, Jan. 28 to
Saturday, Jan. 30

Held in local venues throughout the town, this comedy festival features quality performers, with a final gala performance on Saturday night. Full listings of performers, locations and times will be posted at www.niagaraonthelake.com. Phone 905-468-1950.

Shop - Sip - Sample - SAVOUR

Saturday Jan. 30 to Sunday Jan. 31

A chance to combine several favourite Niagara-on-the-Lake experiences in one! Step into the diverse settings of the Landmark Shops in the Heritage District and enjoy icewine poured by the Wineries of Niagara-on-the-Lake accompanied with culinary samples from the Signature Kitchens of Niagara-on-the-Lake at the Icewine Village. Meet the merchants, chefs and wine experts of Niagara-on-the-Lake. We can't wait to welcome you inside! Call 905-468-1950 for full details or send an email to chamber-events@niagaraonthelake.com. To order your \$30 Insider's Passes online, please go to www.niagaraonthelake.com/winter.

Days of Wine and Chocolate

Weekends in February.

Celebrate the beauty of winter and romance of Valentine's Day in Historic Niagara-on-the-Lake as you explore pairings of two of your favourite indulgences -- wine and chocolate. For more information 905-468-1950 or visit niagaraonthelake.com.

SPRING FABULOUS!

February 25 - March 3

An opportunity to dine at some of Niagara-on-the-Lake's finest restaurants with special prix fixe menus featuring seasonally sensational three-course meals. \$25 for lunch. \$39 for dinner. Come see why Niagara-on-the-Lake was voted as Canada's Culinary Capital of Canada by TripAdvisor. Visit niagaraonthelake.com for full restaurant menus.

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HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR

2015

Rotary
Club of Niagara-on-the-Lake

Friday, December 4 & Saturday, December 5
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. \$25 CAN \$25 US
905.351.3807 niagaraonthelakerotary.ca

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- Chevy EQUINOX
- GMC TERRAIN
- Chevy TRAVERSE
- Chevy SILVERADO (1500 series)
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LOCAL NEWS

■ **WINTER FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS:** Annual show in the 'Spirit of Niagara'

Tin soldiers lead winter light parade

TONY RICCIUTO
Postmedia Network

With the lip of a switch Niagara Falls was transformed into a city of lights Saturday night with the official kickoff for this year's Ontario Power Generation Winter Festival of Lights.

"We come here every year because we love it," said Kari Gregoski of Niagara Falls who was accompanied by her two sons as well as her best friend who brought her daughter and her friend.

"The kids look forward to the fireworks. They liked it better when Disney was here, but we still enjoy it. After the show we will drive around and look at all the lights."

Kialynn Agretto, 9, and

Holly Siver, 10, dressed warm for the occasion because they didn't know cold it might get in Queen Victoria Park so close to the Horseshoe Falls.

"We really don't know what to expect, we haven't been here before so I'm pretty excited," said Siver.

The opening ceremonies in Queen Victoria Park began with two shows — at 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. — on a stage-in-the-round in the middle of the park that provided visitors with a panoramic view.

Niagara Parks Commission chairwoman Janice Thomson said this year the commission has invested an additional \$300,000 toward the festival, which has expanded out into the different business areas.

"This has become such a

tradition here in Niagara with hundreds of thousands of people coming every year to enjoy the beautiful displays," said Thompson. "Enjoy your Falls, enjoy your time with your families and remember this is the place to be for all of your winter holiday celebrations."

The opening ceremony was created and produced by Creativa Inc., an entertainment production company based in Toronto and France. It has been providing entertainment for more than 13 years across North America, Europe and the Middle East.

The highlight of the night was the Chromatique show that immersed the audience in a world of colour, light and sound. It combined art, music and technology.



Niagara Falls Mayor Jim Diodati was joined by a number of special guests on stage Saturday night to officially flip the switch and kick off the 33rd annual Ontario Power Generation Winter Festival of Lights.

One performance of the night that brought smiles to many who attended featured a humorous number by the ensemble of dancing Tin Soldiers.

Following the two shows in Queen Victoria Park, the festivities continued in the Fallsview district with the

Spirit of Niagara sound and light show. It was presented by Fallsview Casino Resort and Tourism Partnership of Niagara at 8 p.m. on the Oakes Hotel Overlooking the Falls.

This is the 33rd season for the festival that was founded in 1983 by a partnership consisting of the Niagara Falls

Canada and Convention Bureau (now known as Niagara Falls Tourism), the City of Niagara Falls, the Niagara Parks Commission and a number of private businesses in Niagara's tourism sector.

The festival runs from until Jan. 31, and features new illuminations in Dufferin Islands, laser-light shows throughout the city along with an interactive laser booth. Along the Niagara Parkway near Dufferin Islands will be the festival's newest illuminated display as DMX Projection Lighting on the Toronto Power Generating Station will bring the building's architecture to life with a light show choreographed to music.

tony.ricciuto@sunmedia.ca

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IN BRIEF

Pelham stables owner charged with sex assault

The owner of a Niagara riding stables was arrested last Thursday on sex charges and police believe there may be additional complainants who have yet to come forward.

Niagara Regional Police on Wednesday launched an investigation into allegations of a sexual assault that occurred at Cedar Ridge Stables in Pelham.

Charged with sexual assault is James Corbett, 59, of Pelham.

Police say investigators have reason

to believe that there may be additional complainants who have not come forward to police.

Cedar Ridge Stables on Sixteen Road offers riding lessons as well as horse boarding and leasing.

Police ask anyone with information to contact the NRP sexual assault unit at 905-688-4111 ext. 5100.

Pelham seeking best dressed Xmas homes

Nominations are being accepted until Dec. 5 for the annual Town of Pelham Christmas Light Competition.

All nominations must be within the Pelham boundary and displays need to be visible from the street. Categories include:

- Griswold/Fun Display – how many lights can you put on your house?
- Traditional – Santa on a sleigh, reindeer, green and red lights
- Classy – modern, single or matching coloured lights
- Business – decorated commercial buildings and entrances

The Pelham Beautification Committee is encouraging people to use high-efficiency

LEDs for their displays.

The town's Christmas Light Tour will run Dec. 12 to Jan. 1, 2016 between 5:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. Your maps will be available at pelham.ca/christmas-in-pelham on Dec. 12. Nomination forms are now available at the same web address.

Nicolson justice critic

Niagara Falls Conservative MP Rob Nicolson has been named the party's justice critic.

The opposition Tories announced their shadow cabinet last Friday and Nicolson, who served for a

time as justice minister when the Conservatives held power from 2006-15, will now be the critic for that portfolio.

Nicolson, a 20-year federal politician, was an integral part of the recently defeated Tory government during the past nine years. He served as Canada's leader of the government in the House of Commons, minister responsible for democratic reform, justice minister and attorney general, defence minister and, most recently, minister of foreign affairs.

Community foundation helps

to fund research

Niagara Community Foundation is funding a new research initiative to build a case for closer economic ties between Hamilton, Niagara and Buffalo.

The cross-border initiative aims to find common economic links exist between the three areas – all once powerful manufacturing hubs – and where there may be opportunities for economic co-operation.

"You can't make a plan if you don't have the data, that is why they are doing the research first," said Liz Palmeri, the foundation's executive director.

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■ COMEDY

Funnyman Crawford honoured for online talk show

ALLAN BERNER
Postmedia Network

After nine seasons as host of an online radio talk show, Joe Crawford has received some unexpected and welcome recognition for the work he has been doing.

Crawford was one of three people who were awarded Radio Personality of the Year Heritage Award by the Artists Music Guild, during a recent awards gala in North Carolina.

"It was definitely a shock, that's for sure," Crawford said, who was also nominated for the Comedian of the Year award.

He said he took a picture with his cellphone when the nominees were displayed for the top comedian award. Although that award went to Jeff Steinburg, an accomplished comedian despite physical disabilities, Crawford wasn't disappointed.

For Crawford, being listed among the other nominees was more than enough.

"A few people go by, and radio personality came up," he said.

Crawford pulled out his cellphone to again take a picture of his name among the list of nominees.

"I wasn't thinking anything of it. I was excited just to see my name and take a picture," he said.

"Then they said, 'And the winner is Joe Crawford.'"

"I dropped my phone on the table. It literally dropped out of my hand," he said.

"I screamed. They joked around and

said probably South Carolina heard me because I screamed so loud. I was in such a state of shock."

He said he was overwhelmed with emotion.

"I was in total shock. I had no idea I was the winner," Crawford said.

He said it was an honour just to be among other nominees, many of whom were relatively famous like rhythm and blues singer Dee Dee Sharp, Martha Reeves from Martha and the Vandellas, and country singer Christy Sutherland.

"There were big celebrities that were there in their own categories," he said.

"It was a huge honour."

Crawford said the awards show was video taped to be broadcast on national television.

"It will air after the Grammy Awards in January," he said, adding that 32 million people are expected to be watching it.

Crawford hasn't let his new found attention go to his head.

After announcing the award on social media websites, he said friends were treating him like a celebrity.

He said he told his friends: "I'm just me still. I'm just Joe Crawford from Port Colborne. Nothing's changed except that I've won an award."

"It's good to my head, but not really going to my head."

Crawford also shared the credit for receiving the award.

He said he has worked with a lot of people who helped him arrange inter-

views with celebrities for his talk show.

"Because of them helping me have celebrities on my show, it's made the show that much better. If it wasn't for them I don't think I'd be able to have

that kind of recognition," he said.

Nevertheless, winning the award will undoubtedly help bolster his career, he said.

"It definitely looks good on a resume."

Crawford's talkshow is broadcast Wednesday nights on his website: www.joecrawfordlive.com.

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■ MUSIC

Decking the halls with Darlene Love

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

By the time Darlene Love headlined her first tour of Canada two years ago, she was already in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. Already a huge comeback story. Already considered one of the greatest pop singers of all time.

What took so long? Like everything else, Love didn't question it. Things happen when they're supposed to. In her case, they're happening in her 70s.

"It was my first (trip) as Darlene Love," she says. "I'd been there before when I backed up Dionne Warwick and Tom Jones, but not as Darlene Love."

"I have a lot of fans over there, which I didn't know I had."

That pretty much sums up Love the past few years — an iconic singer finally getting her due.

Playing Partridge Hall at FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre Nov. 28, Love's story

is a huge part of the 2013 film *20 Feet from Stardom*, which won the Academy Award for best documentary. The movie celebrated the contributions of backup singers, and their unrecognized part in classic recordings. Love knew the role well, singing backing vocals for groups including The Ronettes and The Crystals. Despite assurances from legendary producer Phil Spector that he'd make her a solo star, Love spent the '60s singing in the shadows.

Soon after the movie won the Oscar, Love's scheduled filled up.

"We wanted everybody to see it, but mainly people who could get you to do shows for them," she says. "That did happen." That's probably why I'm as busy as I am right now.

Love can be heard on iconic tracks including The Ronettes' *Be My Baby* and The Crystals' *Da Doo Ron Ron*. But it was an unlikely Christmas song which changed her life, though it took decades to pay off.

When Spector compiled songs for his classic 1963 album *A Christmas Gift For You*, he gave Love the task of singing the vibrant *Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)* because he didn't feel Ronette Spector was up for the job. The song grew in stature over the years, to the point Love was hearing it on the radio while working as a housecleaner. That was her cue to reclaim a career which had stagnated through some of the '70s and '80s.

She sang backup (again) when U2 re-did the song for 1987's *A Very Special Christmas*, but it was a surprise invitation from David Letterman which truly changed her fortunes. In 1986, at the urging of Letterman's band leader Paul Shaffer, she sang it for the last episode before Christmas break. Letterman loved her so much, he made it an annual tradition.

The only year Love missed was 2007 due to a Writer's Guild strike. Her final performance last year was bit-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Darlene Love makes a festive visit to Niagara Saturday at the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

tersweet — just weeks before, Letterman announced his final show would be in May of this year.

"If it wasn't for me being on the David Letterman show one year after year, people would not have really known who Darlene Love was," she says. "That opened many doors for me."

"We always made my jobs around (New York) so I could do the Letterman show... We weren't too far like London or Paris or somewhere."

Even after 52 years, Love gets a charge out of singing the song, which is routinely chosen as one of the greatest Christmas tunes. Rolling Stone ranked it No. 1 in 2010, raving "nobody can match Love's emotion and sheer vocal power."

But Love has more to sing since her last Niagara visit. Plenty more.

Released in September, *Introducing Darlene Love* is her first album in eight years,

WHO: Darlene Love

WHERE: Partridge Hall — FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre, 250 St. Paul St., St. Catharines

WHEN: Nov. 28, 7:30 p.m.

TICKETS: \$62 www.firstontanopac.ca

boasting songs written by Elvis Costello, Bruce Springsteen, Joan Jett. It's produced by Springsteen's guitarist, Steven Van Zandt, a huge Love fan who gives it a vintage '60s sound.

"I've known these people, I've just never been involved with them," she says. "And they wanted to write for me, that was the great thing. We begged them to do it, and they said, 'Of course! What do you want?' A hit record!"

She's so busy Love barely has time to ask "why now?" Whatever resentment she carried has been long buried.

"You can't dwell on it, that's the big thing," she says. "If you dwell on it, you stay there. I wanted to move on. I have a saying: That kind of stuff is too heavy a weight to carry. You have to shake it off, so I left all that back there."

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■ BROADCAST



ET Canada's Cheryl Hickey and Rick Campinelli hosting the live portion of the 2011 New Year's Eve show at Queen Victoria Park.

Falls New Year's Eve show won't be televised

JOHN LAW
Postmedia Network

It's official: New Year's Eve won't be televised from Niagara Falls this year.

Global formally announced it is out as broadcaster for this year's concert.

Christine Shipton, senior vice-president and chief creative officer for Global's parent company Shaw Media, confirmed the network won't carry the show for the first time in seven years.

"Putting together a show of

this calibre requires significant resources, and unfortunately the economic model did not allow us to move forward with the event this year," she said in a statement.

"We maintain a strong relationship with the City of Niagara Falls and the Niagara Parks Commission and look forward to promoting the upcoming celebration."

"We wish them continued success with the annual New Year's Eve in Niagara Falls event."

This year's broadcast has been in limbo all year. Over the summer, Mayor Jim Diodati said

negotiations were ongoing with the network, with talks focused on "who is going to pay for what" in the face of rising costs.

Last year's broadcast, headlined by country star Keith Urban, cost \$3 million to produce. The city secured about \$20,000 in grants for the show, to go with contributions from other tourism partners like Niagara Casinos (\$50,000) and Niagara Parks Commission (\$100,000).

In September, Canadian entertainment website Pop Goes the News posted a story claiming the New Year's show was "scrapped" by Global/Shaw Media because of the high costs.

Diodati disputed the story, saying talks with the network hadn't stopped.

Last year's show at Queen Victoria Park was the biggest ever, with ratings up more than 30% over the 2013 broadcast. About 4.2 million viewers tuned in at midnight.

One tourism partner suggested Global wanted \$800,000 more to do the show again this year.

CTV was rumoured to be ready to step in this year, but Diodati said a deal couldn't be worked out in time.

"It's unfortunate," he said. "We really were working to put on a show, but the logistics didn't make sense for this year."

"That was always the objective, to put a top drawer product on the national stage," he added. "But if we couldn't do that level, we didn't want to come in with something that would disappoint people."

Which doesn't mean there won't be a concert. Diodati said details of a scaled-back event will be announced soon, likely with classic rock acts.

Niagara Casinos spokesman Greg Medulian said stakeholders will meet next week to "iron out the details," but the city's two casinos remain committed to the event "with or without a broadcast this year."

"It would make no sense to let an event with such widespread appeal simply fade away," he said. "The event's reputation is too big and too important to Niagara Falls, and frankly Canada, to keep off television for very long."

Diodati promised this will be a one-year blip for the New Year's show. Details will be announced early in 2016 about a "multi-year" agreement for a national broadcast show starting next year.

"We had to take a step back in order to jump forward," he said, adding the show will be as big as last year again.

"It will be that and more."

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Black Friday Event

Nov. 26 - 28

OVER THE RIVER

Tracy Morgan plays Seneca Casino in Feb.

After a 2014 crash that nearly killed him, comedian Tracy Morgan will make his local return in February.

Morgan performs at Seneca Niagara Casino's Events Center Feb. 26, where he last performed in August 2013. Less than a year after that show, Morgan was a passenger in a Mercedes Sprinter bus that was struck

from behind by a Walmart tractor-trailer on the New Jersey Turnpike. The crash killed Morgan's comedian friend, James McNair, and sent him to hospital with several injuries. He was in a coma for two weeks.

During his extensive February will be Richard



TRACY MORGAN

recovery, Morgan hosted an episode of *Saturday Night Live* last month.

Tickets for Morgan start at \$45, on sale now at SenecaCasinos.com and Ticketmaster.com.

Also playing the Seneca's Bear's Den Showroom in

Marx (Feb. 18), guitarist Jimmy Wolf (Feb. 4), family group The Cowells (Feb. 5), Sandy Hackett's Rat Pack (Feb. 27) and Eagles tribute band Hotel California (Feb. 20).

Center will be the Eli Young Band (Feb. 27) and The Peking Acrobats (Feb. 12 and 13). Tickets for all shows are available now.

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■ MUSIC

Hell raisin' homecoming for Tim Hicks

JOHN LAW

Postmedia Network

Tim Hicks recalls sitting in class at A.N. Myer Secondary School in Niagara Falls, so dead from a night before the teacher had to crack a window open to keep him awake.

The reason? He was in the bars all night. He was barely 15.

"As soon as I could grow a goatee to look older," he says with a laugh.

He wasn't up to trouble—in fact, his mom let him quit his first-aid job to do it. These Niagara bars are where Tim Hicks—future country music star—got his start, hooking up with bands and playing cover songs.

It wasn't glamorous. It wasn't easy. Especially when they found out he was underage.

"One of my first gigs was at the Queenston Hotel in St. Catharines, and they made me stand on the sidewalk between sets," he recalls. "They clued in 'This guy isn't old enough to be here.' They

didn't fire the band. They just said 'You've got to leave during the break.' So there I am standing outside in February freezing my buns off, waiting to go back in."

All part of the dues paid to get to Friday night, when Hicks plays a huge homecoming show at Scotiabank Convention Centre. It's the biggest show of his Get a Little Crazy tour, and he's going to make it count.

"I can't wait," he says. "I'm seeing tweets from people I went to school with, my teachers, my neighbours, my kids' teachers, colleagues of my wife, my grandmother's going to be there—the whole family has tickets."

"It's almost like music to show it off a little bit. Like, 'This is what we've been working on the last two years, everybody. Check it out.' It's super exciting to bring it home."

Nov 36, Hicks is on the verge of superstardom in Canada with four top 10 hits on the country charts and eight Canadian Country Music

Association nominations (winning in 2014 for rising stars). But these past two years didn't happen overnight. Like virtually every Niagara musician, you either played cover songs or you didn't get work. Hicks embraced the gig, looking at 'ar' and 'work' as two separate things. Before he could indulge his art, he had to put the work in. Sometimes by playing AC/DC in dingy beer halls.

"We did originals, too. We'd slip them in, but they were terrible songs," he recalls. "But if you want to play in bars like that, you had to play covers. It was three 45-minute sets, or four 30 (minute sets), depending what the gigs was."

"It was long, but that's where I began cutting my teeth."

He was so entrenched, Hicks was still doing cover gigs after he started getting radio play. It resulted in a few surreal nights.

"My manager was begging me to cancel," he says. "I had decided I wasn't going to cancel on the people that had

WHO: Tim Hicks, with guests Cold Creek County and Jason Benoit.

WHERE: Scotiabank Convention Centre, 6815 Stanley Ave., Niagara Falls

WHEN: Nov. 27, 8 p.m.

TICKETS: \$49 www.ticketpro.ca

paid my mortgage for so many years.

"What happened was, people started to come to the show because they heard the song on the radio and were asking me to play my own stuff. We decided in the band to make the second set our tour set. The opening set was all covers, but we'd come out strong a-blaazin' with *Get by and Stranger Beer* and all those songs. Don't get hauled into the office by the very clubs I was loyal to for all those years."

"I was told 'You're not allowed to play your own songs here.' Songs that went on to be gold records in Can-



JULIE JOCKMAN / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

Tim Hicks comes home for a date at Scotiabank Convention Centre Nov. 27.

ada."

After winning male vocalist of the year at the 2011 Niagara Music Awards, Hicks' momentum has brought him out of the clubs and into theatres and small arenas. The Get a Little Crazy tour is a huge production, and it hit Hicks just before he played the first show Nov. 1, a sold-out date in Sault Ste. Marie.

"It was especially great for me, because the last time I was in Sault Ste. Marie I was playing in the world's worst

Neil Diamond tribute band. I felt like I got to redeem myself."

He promises a few surprises for his homecoming show.

"There's a couple of things that are going to go on that we haven't had on at the previous shows. We're bringing out a few special things for this one. Some extra production. I can't wait for people to see this show. I think we're going to shock a lot of people."

john.law@summa.ca

Construction of Underground Transmission Line Infrastructure Notice

For the Niagara Region Wind Project, FWRN LP

Project Name Niagara Region Wind Project (the "Project")

Project Location Within the Townships of West Lincoln and Wainfleet and the Town of Lincoln in the Niagara Region and Halimand County in Southern Ontario

Notice Dated At Halimand County and Niagara Region, the 18th of November 2015.

Niagara Region Wind Corporation, now FWRN LP (the "Proponent"), are engaging in a renewable energy project for which a Renewable Energy Approval ("REA") was issued by the Ministry of the Environment (now the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change) on November 21, 2014.

Project Description

The Project is located within the Townships of West Lincoln and Wainfleet and the Town of Lincoln in the Niagara Region and Halimand County in Southern Ontario. The Project will consist of 77 wind turbine generators, step-up transformer, electrical collector lines, a transmission line, two transformer substations, turbine access roads and construction staging areas. The Project will have a total maximum nameplate capacity of up to 230 MW.

Construction of Underground Transmission Line Infrastructure

Installation of underground transmission line infrastructure is expected to begin on December 1, 2015, on the following roads:

- Mountainview Road;
- Walker Road;
- Fly Road/Mud Street;
- Thirty Road;
- Young Street;
- South Grimsby Road 5;
- West Street/Hwy 20;
- South Grimsby Road 6;
- Smithville Townline Road;
- Taber Road;
- Sixteen Road;
- Port Davidson Road;
- Canborough Road
- Creek Road;
- Slide Road 42;
- Concession Road 6;
- Shafley Road;
- Hwy 3; and
- Wainfleet-Dunnville Townline Road.

Activities will include asphalt cutting and removal, trench excavation, conduit installation, concrete placement, vault installation, backfill, and compaction and road remediation. These activities are described in detail in the REA technical reports found on the Project website: www.nrfw.ca. Construction activities are expected to last approximately 7 months.

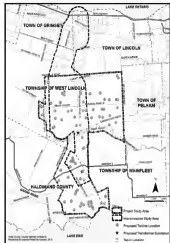
Please note that public services (i.e. mail delivery, garbage pick-up, school buses, etc.) may be disrupted during this time.

If you have any objections in the right-of-way near your property (e.g. fences, private gas lines, gardens, tiles, electrical lines), please contact Shilo Berriman (contact information below).

Project Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the Project's construction phase, please do not hesitate to contact us at:

NIAGARA REGION WIND PROJECT CONTACT	GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION
Shilo Berriman Email: shilo.berriman@nrcenr.com Cell: 289-683-2953	General Number: 819-363-6491 Toll Free: 1-844-363-6491 Project email: info@nrfw.ca Project website: www.nrfw.ca



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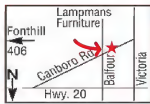
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